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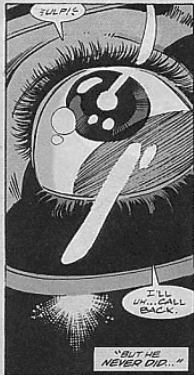
AND THE



30TH
ANNIVERSARY
THE
**AMAZING
SPIDER-MAN**
1962-1992

X-MEN®

MADUREIRA *SR*



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"...BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION
OF ITS LEAD PLAYERS?"

STAN LEE PRESENTS
EXCALIBUR IN...

ALAN DAVIS--PLOT SCOTT LOBBELL--WORDS
JOE MADUREIRA--PENCILS JOE RUBINSTEIN--INKER
KEN LOPEZ--LETTERS KEVIN TINSLEY--COLORS
TERRY KAVANAGH--EDITOR TOM DECALO--ED. IN CHIEF

EXCALIBUR CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT
& ALAN DAVIS

FOR WHOM THE BELL TROLLS!

I AM AFRAID,
CAPTAIN
BRITAIN--WE MAY
HAVE EXHAUSTED
THIS PARTICULAR
VENUE.

YOU'RE SUGGESTING
WE SIMPLY ALLOW
SAT-YR'S ACCESS TO
ALL THE RESOURCES
SHE GAINED--

--FROM HER HOSTILE
TAKEOVER OF THE CRIME
QUEEN NAMED VIXEN?--

I THINK
NIGHTCRAWLER IS
ONLY SAYING THAT
WE'RE NOT GOING
TO FIND HER DOWN
HERE.

WE'VE BEEN
SEARCHING LUK--
ALMOST NONSTOP--
FOR A WEEK.

YET, MEGGAN--WE
KNOW FROM YOUR PREVIOUS
EXPERIENCE THAT VIXEN
USED THE SEWER
SYSTEM TO ACCESS HER
PRIMARY UNDERGROUND
HEADQUARTERS.

WHAT ARE YOUR
FEELINGS ON
THIS MATTER
SHADOWCAT?

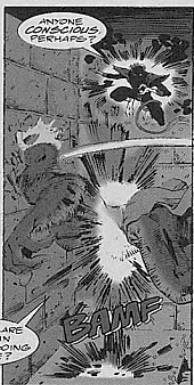
I'M ALL FOR
SEARCHING FOR
NEEDLES IN
HAYSTACKS,
CERISE--

--BUT USUALLY,
THE HAYSTACKS
DON'T SMELL THIS
FLUNKY!

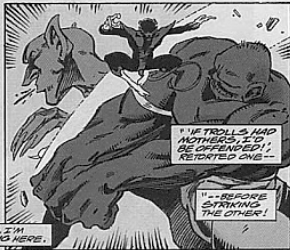
A LAST ISSUE...?--TK





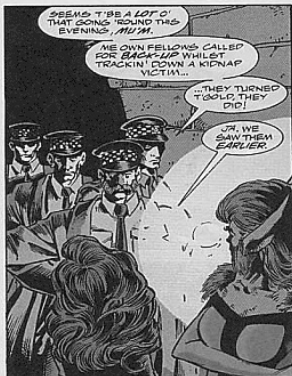












...TOTALLY UNAWARE
THAT AT THE VERY
SAME INSTANT--

--SKIMMING OVER THE
POD, AN ENTIRELY UN-
EXPECTED AND NOT
NECESSARILY WANTED
CONTINGENT OF REIN-
FORCEMENTS WAS ON
ITS WAY.

GASP

BRRRR

GOODSOLLYGOSH!

SAY
TAIN'T
GO!

"MUTANTS SAME AS
EXCALIBUR, THIS
CLEAN CALL THEMSELVES..."

EXCALIBUR

WHAT'S
LIKE THE
BIG
RUSH?

TOM JONES IS AN
ASSOCIATE, JUBILEE,
FROM OUR DAYS AS
THE ORIGINAL
X-FACTOR.

NEVER
HEARD
OF 'IM...

YOU
WEREN'T
SUPPOSED
TO.

BEAST??

I'D BE
GLAD TO,
CYCLOPS.

THE STORY BEGAN
WHEN THE AFORE-
MENTIONED THOMAS
WAS ABDUCTED
FROM HEARTH AND
HOME...

...BY
A LONE
TROLL.

CYKE, MYSELF, ICEMAN,
ARCHANGEL, AND MARVEL
GIRL ANSWERED A CALL
FOR HELP FROM THE BOY'S
MOTHER.

MRS. JONES
BELIEVED THE
TROLL TO HAVE
BEEN A
MUTANT.

A PERFECTLY
UNDERSTANDABLE
FAUX PAS.



IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO FOLLOW THEIR TRAIL ON THE STREETS, QUITE LITERALLY PAVED WITH AL 79 ON THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS.

THAT'S GOLD FOR THE TECHNICALLY IMPAIRED.



WE LEARNED THERE WAS A COMMUNITY OF UPWARDLY MOBILE TROLLS--

--UNITED IN THEIR DESIRE TO DESTROY THE WORLD ECONOMY.



TWO OF THE LOT MADE THE MISTAKE OF THREATENING YOUNG TOM'S MOM--

--IN AN ATTEMPT TO USE HIS MUTANT ABILITY TO CREATE ALCHEMICAL TRANS-MUTATIONS THAT WOULD FURTHER THEIR CAUSE.



HE REBELLED-- USING HIS CAPTORS TO CREATE A UNIQUE FORM OF FOOL'S GOLD.

FEELING THE NEED TO CONTINUE HIS STUDIES, TOM BROOGE OFF OUR OFFER TO HELP AVOID HIS MUTANT ABILITIES AS ALCHEMY.

SO HE STARTS FREAKIN' ABOUT FOR HELP AND WE COME RUNNING?

BUCKLE UP, JUBILATION.

FOR LANDING, WOLVERINE? I'M STRAPPED-IN ALREADY!

I MEANT YER LIP.















"BY NOW, THE MIGHTY
MARCHING MUTANTS--"

"--UNDER THE PSYCHIC
SEEKINGS OF
PSYLOCKE--"

THEY KNOW
WE ARE
COMING.

"--HAD MADE THEIR
WAY TO THE FRONT
DOOR OF TROLL
ASSOCIATES, INC.

OF COURSE.

LET'S NOT KEEP
OUR HOSTS WAITING,
PEOPLE.

SHADOWCAT
YOU HAVE POINT.

RECOGNITER,
BUT TAKE NO
ACTION ON YOUR
OWN.

AND MISS OUT
ON SOME OLD-
FASHIONED
TEAMWORK?

I
WOULDN'T
DREAM
OF IT.

"MOMENTS
PASSED."

"ONE WAS
PENSIVE..."

"...THE OTHERS WAITED."

I GUESS IT'S
"ALL CLEAR."

I MEAN, IT'S NOT
LIKE I SAW ANY
HOSTILES OR
ANYTHING.

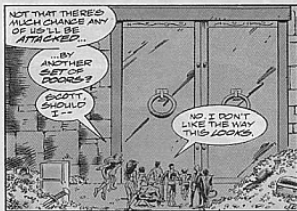
BEAST?

CERTAINLY,
CYCLOPS.

IN ORDER
THAT WE MIGHT
DISCERN THE
NATURE OF HER
RETICENCE...

"YOU'RE SUGGESTING
I USE MY NOT UNFOR-
GIVABLE STRENGTH
TO PRY THE DOORS OF
THIS INNERMOST OF
SANCTUUMS?"

CRACK
CRACK
CRACK





"IF YOU SAID
EVERYONE GO
BRA-BLOOM!"

BRA-BLOOM

"--YOU'D BE
RIGHT."

NEXT ISSUE: WHAT'S LEFT
OF THE X-TEAMS VS.
TROLLOP ASSEMBLED!

SWORD STROKES

% MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

TERRY KAVANAGH
EDITOR
MARK POWERS
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: if you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dear *Sword Strokes*,

When I saw that the X-Men had finally made an appearance in EXCALIBUR, I thought that it was yet another dream — but truly (and amazingly) it was real. I must say it has been a long wait. Issue #52 was outstanding! I learned a lot about Phoenix's past and how she came to be. It would be great if we could learn more about the rest of EXCALIBUR's past as well as facts that have never been revealed about them before. There was also a flying pig on the last page. Was that really necessary? On second thought, I'd rather not ask.

I enjoyed reading EXCALIBUR #53. The story was wonderful and the art was just superb. It was great to see Brian and Meggan taking time to enjoy themselves.

Thank you for taking the time — and Make Mine Marvel!

Mike Furlan
R.R. 1
Kars, Ontario
Canada KOA 2E0

Alan is working his way through the pasts of all the members of EXCALIBUR. Mike! So far you've gotten to know Meggan, Rachel and Brian better — just stay tuned for more on your favorite band of British heroes!

Dear Terry,

This letter is about heroes. Not just the "Oh that guy is such a good fighter" type of hero, but something a little more. My heroes range from a Cosmic Avenger to a super-spy, but my second longest-running hero is found in the pages of EXCALIBUR. His name is Brian Braddock.

I realize that he is not the most popular member of the team among the majority of fans, but I have read this book for the past four years for one reason — Captain Britain.

After issue #21 (my first issue of EXCALIBUR), I thought he was the character with the most personality, and after reading all the back issues and learning of his alcoholism, he became even more real to me.

Then along came Scott Lobdell's classic issue #38. The ending of that story brought a tear to my eye, when Brian told the man he knew as Dr. Walshe, "Don't apologize for being who you are, sir. It doesn't become a gentleman." Those words really brought about a change in my life that I simply cannot put into words. Brian also, in the same issue, proved even a hero can cry.

When the Captain Britain Corps took Brian, I was certain this was Alan Davis's way of "offing" the character. But instead, we were shown how strong and honorable Brian really is. Alan Davis wrote a terrific story. Then Scott returned for issue #53, and again we learn more about Brian's past.

I think I like Captain Britain because he is the type of guy who does not bow away from what he believes in. He will fight to the death for his friends and family. Brian cares too much at times, but deep down he's no idiot. He is just a man who does his best.

Thanks for the time, guys. I really do appreciate it. Take care.

Michael D. Krabbenhoft
R.R. #3 Box 262
Maquoketa, IA 52609

Cap will continue to be exactly the kind of hero you describe, Michael. Thank!

Dear *Sword Strokes*,

James Fry did a superb job filling in for Alan Davis in the penciling department in EXCALIBUR #53. The story was very interesting, and I enjoyed it a lot. I didn't know that Brian and Peter were roommates! It was cool to see them fighting side-by-side. Great job, guys!

Keep up the terrific work, dudes! Until Meggan shaves off all her hair, Make Mine Marvel!

Brian Defending
43 South Meadows Drive
Appleton, WI 54915

You weren't the only one who enjoyed James's work, Brian! Check out the next letter and answer for more info!

Dear *Sword Strokes*,

I loved it! Issue #53 was captivating! I admit it was only a filler issue, but I really enjoyed it.

Mr. Scott Lobdell even made me like and respect Captain Britain! The story was excellent!

The use of Spider-Man was fantastic. He was in character and wasn't made the unofficial "star" of this issue. Great cover, by the way! Spidey's, and Peter's, lectures to Brian made the story and suited Spidey's character to a "T." I do have a question, though. Did Peter/Spidey realize Brian was Cap? It seemed like it at times.

One thing I wondered though, where have I seen James Fry's pencils before? They were fantastic, and I'm positive I have seen his work before.

By the way, did you know that at the same time Spidey appeared in EXCALIBUR, that Excalibur appeared in SPIDER-MAN #257? I thought it was intentional, you know, a cross-over, but it wasn't.

Until EXcalibur tangles with Mephisto, Make Mine Marvel!

Ron Clarke
(Address withheld upon request)

Hey! Just a filler! No way! This story fit right in, and continued our ongoing mission to fill everyone in on the interesting and exciting pasts of the team members! But we are glad to hear that you enjoyed it so much!

Yes! You have seen James Fry's work before, Ron, and you'll have a chance to see it again! He's done lots of stuff here and there in the past — two of our favorites are NAMOR ANNUAL #1 and #2. The good news is that James is the new regular penciler on MOON KNIGHT! He starts with issue #45. We've peeked at some of the pages that are lying around the office, and we can tell you that you won't want to miss this!

Dear Mr. Davis,

It took me years to find a woman who wouldn't just let me read comics in bed, but would let me read them to her. When I found such a rare and angelic paragon, I married her at once.

I know that comics have a much larger male audience than a female one. I've noticed that my wife is far more interested in some comics than others. She regularly reads the AVENGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE HULK...and EXCALIBUR. Why?

Well, Sal's more mature than me. She doesn't need my boyish power-fantasies, so the rough, tough, killer characters do nothing for her. As a sophisticated adult, she's more attracted to Cap's maturity than to Thunderbolt's impossible biceps or Cable's big guns. She likes the Hulk because he's witty! And she enjoys the clever interweaving of plots, the warm camaraderie, the generous humor and the refreshing originality of EXCALIBUR.

Sal really enjoys the characters in EXCALIBUR, especially Meggan's innocent delight at a world the rest of us take for granted. I back Captain Britain all the way, because a lifetime of comic reading has taught me that a big, strong, handsome chaplike trying so hard to be a hero must be okay. Sal thinks he's a boorish pig and advises Meggan to go off with that sexy, sensitive Nightcrawler.

Now I believe that the future of the comics industry can only be improved by attracting more women readers and more women creators. The key lies not in "coloring" specifically to women (don't rush the return of Mile the Model), but providing high quality stories which rely on intelligent use of character, narration style and plot development instead of mindless fighting and two-dimensional "gimmick" characters; stories which appeal to the mind and spirit as well as the ego and glands. EXCALIBUR, with its strong but diverse female cast, is at the forefront of such publications. Well done.

Please do keep striving to present quality work which deals fairly with all the cast, be they male, female, or dimension-hopping robot, portraying them all as well-rounded individuals and not stereotyped ciphers. Keep up the good work, Alan — my marriage depends upon it!

Ian Watson
Lan Yarrow
199 Sheffield Road
Barnsley, Yorkshire
Great Britain S70 4DE

Very well said, Ian! We couldn't agree with you more! Thank you for a thoughtful letter.

NEXT ISSUE: EXcalibur — what's left of it — teams up with the X-Men, with Brian and Meggan's fate in the balance. But is Nightcrawler's leadership enough to keep the team from falling apart?